Chapter 38 Rose Balsam and Wood Sorrel ②

AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
I DRANK ALCOHOL AND PASSED OUT AFTER PLAYING ELEPHANT CHESS WITH MAOMAO.
THROB
ズキ
AND NOW I'M TO BUY OUT THE CONTRACT OF A COURTESAN OF MY CHOOSING.
...IS THIS... VERDI-GRIS?
I FEEL AS IF I'VE JUST HAD A VERY NOSTALGIC DREAM.
THERE'S NO MISTAKING THAT CROOKED PINKY.
DIG
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IF SHE HATES ME, SO BE IT.
I ONLY WANT TO KEEP HER CLOSE.
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WORKING TOWARD ALL ALONG.
I'LL MAKE HIM PAY.
HOW DARE HE PUT HIS HAND ON MY DAUGHTER'S SHOULDER THREE TIMES DURING OUR MATCHES?!
HOW SHALL I EXACT MY REVENGE?
GRIND
GRIND
ONE DAY, THOUGH, I'LL GET HER BACK IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO.
BUT I'LL GIVE UP QUIETLY THIS TIME.
THAT FELLOW, HOW-EVER...
I KNOW THAT VOICE...
ARE YOU AWAKE?

GOOD-NESS, YOU LOOK AWFUL.
I WASN'T PLANNING TO END UP LIKE THIS MYSELF.
HELLO, MEIMEI.
THE MESSENGER OF SOME NOBLE OR OTHER LEFT YOU HERE.
MEIMEI, ONE OF THE THREE PRINCESSES OF VERDI-GRIS...
...WAS APPREN-TICED UNDER FENGXIAN.
I'M SURE IT WAS MEIMEI, COME TO THINK OF IT.
SHE WAS THE GIRL FENGXIAN SENT OUT OF THE ROOM ON THAT FATEFUL DAY.
SHE'D SQUIRM IN HER SEAT WHEN I PRAISED HER FOR HAVING TALENT FOR THE GAME.
I PLAYED AGAINST HER MANY TIMES WHEN SHE WAS FENGXIAN'S GIRL IN TRAINING.
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PERHAPS IT'S OUT OF SOME SENSE OF GUILT FOR LEAVING THAT DAY...
...THAT SHE TAKES CARE OF ME IN A MULTITUDE OF WAYS.
ONCE I'D FINISHED PAYING REPARA-TIONS OVER THE COURSE OF A DECADE...
...MEIMEI ALONE WOULD PERMIT ME TO ENTER HER CHAMBERS.
SHE'S THE ONLY COURTE-SAN AT VERDIGRIS WHO WILL ENTERTAIN ME AS A PATRON.
GULP
THANK YOU.
HERE, DRINK THIS.
TEE-HEE!
MAOMAO'S SPECIAL BREW, I BELIEVE!
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THIS ?!
KOFF!
THAT'S BITTER!
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SHE ALSO LEFT THIS BOX HERE FOR YOU.
...YOU DON'T SAY?
GRIN

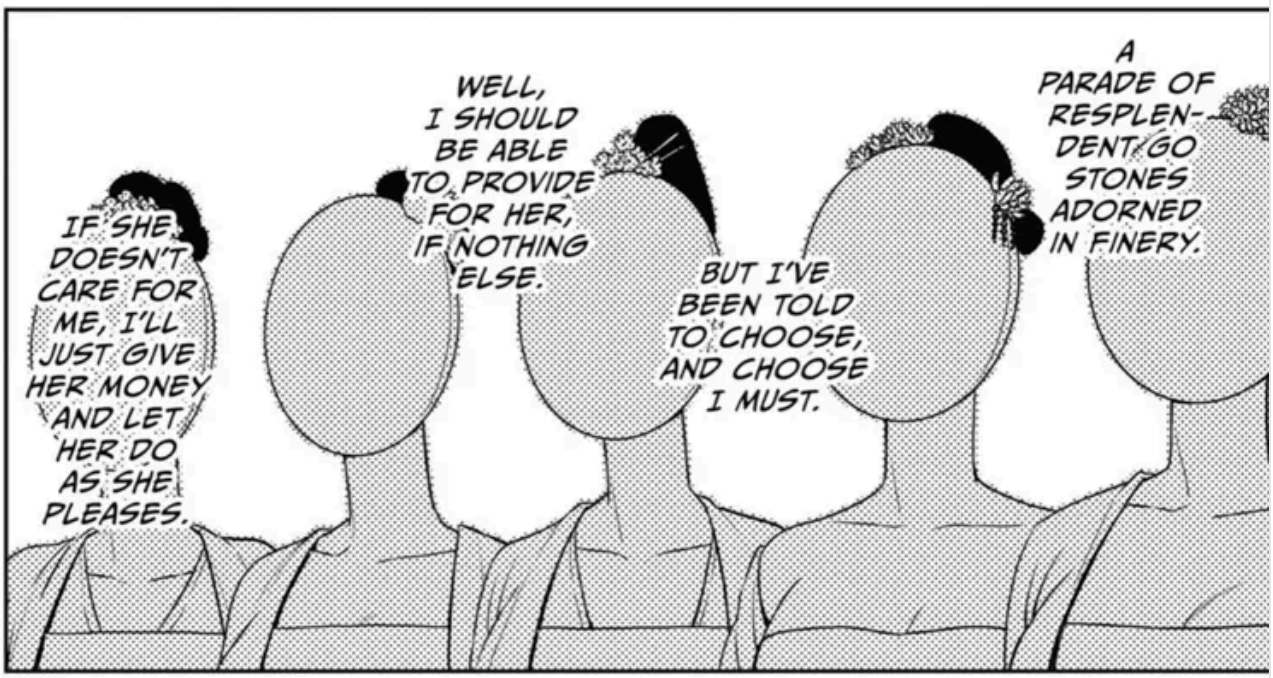
OH?
...A DRIED ROSE?

UPON HEARING THE BLUE ROSE RUMORS FROM MY UNCLE...
...I'D WANTED TO TEST IT OUT FOR MYSELF AND MADE BLUE ROSES AS A PRANK.
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS POSSIBLE TO PRESERVE THEIR SHAPE LIKE THIS.
BUT THAT WAS A VERY LONG TIME AGO.
I'M SURE YOU'RE WELL AWARE THAT IT'S GONNA COST YOU MORE THAN ONE OR TWO THOUSAND SILVERS!
YOU'RE TO BUY OUT ONE OF MY GIRLS.
...THAT VOICE... THE MADAM IS HERE, AND NO MISTAKE.
HAD ENOUGH BEAUTY SLEEP, EH?

EVER THE MISER, THIS ONE.
OH, I KNOW.
AND IF 10,000 SILVER ISN'T ENOUGH, THEN IT MAY BE 20 OR EVEN 30.
HMPH!
THOUGH 100,000 WOULD BE PUSHING IT.
BUT ...
...I SUPPOSE I CAN JUST PESTER MY NEPHEW FOR THE MONEY IN THAT CASE.
SO LONG AS WE UNDER-STAND EACH OTHER.
NOW COME THIS WAY.
PICK WHICH-EVER LADY YOU'D LIKE.

SWISH

WELL, NOW I'M IN A PICKLE.
I SAID YOU COULD PICK WHOM-EVER YOU'D LIKE.
BUT MIND YOU'LL PAY THROUGH THE NOSE IF YOU HAVE EXPENSIVE TASTES.
MEH!
OH?
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT INCLUDING THE THREE PRIN-CESSES?


IF SHE DOESN'T CARE FOR ME, I'LL JUST GIVE HER MONEY AND LET HER DO AS SHE PLEASES.
WELL, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR HER, IF NOTHING ELSE.
BUT I'VE BEEN TOLD TO CHOOSE, AND CHOOSE I MUST.
A PARADE OF RESPLEN-DENT GO STONES ADORNED IN FINERY.

THE INTENSITY I FELT BACK THEN HAS BEEN LOST TO ME FOR GOOD.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO I PICK...
...TO REPAY MEIMEI FOR EVERYTHING SHE'S DONE FOR ME.
...PERHAPS IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD...
KNOWING THAT...
I TOO TAKE PRIDE IN BEING A COURTESAN.
SIR LAKAN.

IF IT IS ME YOU DESIRE, I WILL NOT HESITATE TO BE YOURS.
HOW-EVER...
CLICK
...IF YOU ARE TO PICK ONE OF US, THEN PLEASE CHOOSE THE WOMAN YOU TRULY WANT.

MEI-MEI!
HOW DARE YOU OPEN THAT WITHOUT PERMIS-SION?!
揺
揺
揺

DASH
WHERE D'YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING ?!
I KNOW THIS.
46

I KNOW THIS SONG.
CLATTER
ガシャン
I KNOW THIS VOICE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
STOMP
STOMP
THAT'S A SICK-ROOM!
COME OUT OF THERE AT ONCE!
外
姿
許
我
好
實
實

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR PICK OF THE GIRLS IN THE OTHER ROOM!
I MUST PICK.
FWISH
YES.
MADAM.
BE IT 100,000 ...
...OR EVEN 200,000 SILVER...
I'LL PAY HOWEVER MUCH YOU WISH.

IT'S HER I WANT.
DO YOU HEAR YOUR-SELF RIGHT NOW?!
YOU SAID I COULD PICK ANYONE I WANT.

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...WHY COULDN'T THIS HAVE HAPPENED SOONER?
OH, SIS.
我一
討
媽
媽
好

...BEFORE I EVER HAD THE CHANCE TO GET MY HOPES UP...
...THIS COULD ALL HAVE BEEN OVER AND DONE WITH...

...FROM THE START...
IF YOU'D BEEN HONEST ABOUT YOUR FEEL-INGS...

I'LL BE TAKING THIS COURTESAN'S CONTRACT OFF YOUR HANDS.
MAD-AM.

I CHOOSE THIS WOMAN, BEAUTIFUL AS A ROSE BALSAM, TO BE MY WIFE...